Interpellation.

(4) the progressive and prosperous condition of the State finance;

(5) the feasibility of raising a public loan for the purpose if necessary; and

(6) the certainty of a balance of profit to the State even if the work is entrusted to any Railway Company on a guaranteed interest of 5 per cent.

Answer.

Secretary Mr. S. Parameswara Aiyar.

21. (*a*) Are the Government aware that the industry of making jaggery from the cocoanut tree, the palmyra tree and the sago palm (choondapana) is fast dying out in our State? (*vide* the statistics given in the Administration Reports for 1093 and 1094:—

In 1092 quantity exported was 1,51,598 Cwts. to the value of Rs. 5,30,591.
„ 1093. „ exported was 1,05,327 Cwts. to the value of Rs. 3,68,645.
„ 1094 „ exported was 80,942 Cwts. to the value Rs. 2,83,300.

21. (*a*) & (*b*) Government are not aware that the jaggery industry is dying out as stated by the Member. The fall in exports may be due to increased local consumption of the article and its use in the distilleries for production of arrack.

(*b*) Do the Government know that jaggery was largely used by the people of the country in the place of sugar and that it is very difficult to obtain the article for local consumption even at the very high price which it commands in the local market?

(*c*) Are the Government aware that this is due to the very limited number of licenses issued by the Excise Department under what is known as the Sweet Toddy Rules with a view to raise the consumption of toddy for the purpose of increased revenue?

(*c*) No. The Sweet Toddy Rules are not applicable to the taluks of the Southern Division and to the taluks of Neyyattinkara and Shencottah where alone palmyra jaggery is made. In the few places where jaggery is manufactured from sweet toddy drawn from the cocoanut and the sago palm, licenses are freely issued for the tapping of sweet toddy to all *bona fide* manufacturers of jaggery. The Sweet Toddy Rules were not framed with a view to raise the consumption of toddy, but are intended to prevent the illicit manufacture of fermented toddy.

(*d*) Do the Government concur in the view of the Excise Department that if greater liberty was given for tapping sweet toddy it would open a door to the illicit manufacture of arrack?

(*d*) The answer is in the affirmative.

(*e*) Even if the view be correct, is not the virtual prohibition of tapping such trees for the manufacture of jaggery, an invasion of the rights of the owners of such trees, an invasion which has neither a legal nor an equitable justification?

(*e*) No.

(*f*) Should not the excise authorities find out some proper method to prevent illicit tapping or manufacture of arrack rather than destroy a very useful and profitable industry of the country?

(*f*) Government do not accept the view that the rules have tended to destroy the jaggery industry.

(*g*) Will the Government be pleased to state whether they propose to look into the deplorable condition of this industry with a view to revive and develop the same on a large scale.

(*g*) Government will look into the question of the development of the industry and will be glad to consider any useful suggestions that may be made.

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